

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 EUR-12 SMS-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00
INRE-00 ICAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 MCE-00 OMB-01
TRSE-00 ACDA-12 SAA-01 SES-02 /082 W
-----107456 161529Z /53

O 161430Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5708
INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
/CHUSMTM DHAHRAN
USMTM RIYADH
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 4054

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SA, YE
SUBJ: NO TURN TO THE SOVIETS

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO SAUDI ENVOY, YAR PRESIDENT SALIH HAS ONCE AGAIN REJECTED SOVIET OFFER OF IMMEDIATE AND MASSIVE ARMS DELIVERIES. BREAK-DOWN OF TALKS WITH US WAS "MISUNDERSTANDING" WHICH SALIH WANTS CLEAR AWAY IN ORDER TO START AGAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. ALI MUSALLIM, SAUDI ENVOY FROM OFFICE OF PRINCE SULTAN, CALLED ON CHARGE AND EMBOFF ENGLEHART IN EMBASSY 16 AUGUST AFTER SETTING UP APPOINTMENT BY RAMADAN TELECON LAST NIGHT AT TWO A.M. TO CHARGE'S HOME.

2. MUSALLIM SAID HE HAD TWICE POSTPONED HIS RETURN TO SAUDI ARABIA TO MAKE SURE HE UNDERSTOOD REASONS FOR FAILURE OF ARMS TALKS LAST WEEK AND TO HAMMER OUT PLAN TO GET SAUDI, U.S., YEMENI ARMS COOPERATION BACK ON TRACK.

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3. CHARGE NOTED THAT YAR PRESIDENT HAD RECEIVED SOVIET CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AXENENOK. MUSALLIM SAID, YES, NEWS OF FAILURE OF US/SAUDI MISSION HAD QUICKLY LEAKED OUT AND SOVIETS HAD CLAMMERED TO YAR PRESIDENT FOR INTERVIEW. SALIH AGREED AND AXENENOK TOLD HIM THAT SQUADRON OF MIG 21'S COULD BE DELIVERED WITHIN TWO

WEEKS, NEW TANKS COULD COME IN IN SAME PERIOD, SOME ROCKETS YEMENIS SOUGHT COULD ALSO BE DELIVERED AT ONCE. RADAR AND OTHER EQUIPMENT DESIRED BY YEMENIS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE QUICKLY AND THIS IMPACT PACKAGE WOULD BE TIED TO FURTHER STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN MID-TERM.

4. SALIH REFUSED.

5. MUSALLIM CLAIMS THAT SALIH DOES NOT SEE EVENTS OF LAST WEEK AS YEMENI "REJECTION" OF US/SAUDI OFFER. THAT IS "MISUNDERSTANDING" LIKE YEMENI VIEW THAT U.S. NOW REFUSING TO CONSIDER ANY FURTHER EQUIPMENT REQUESTS BEYOND IMPACT PACKAGE.

6. CHARGE TOLD MUSALLIM THAT IN TALK WITH YAR PRIME MINISTER TWO DAYS BEFORE, MESSAGE HAD BEEN SENT TO SALIH TO REASSURE HIM OF U.S. DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO TALK AND BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH EXPANDED PROGRAM OF ARMS COOPERATION. CHARGE COMMENTED THAT IF SALIH POSITION WAS AS DESCRIBED IT WAS BASICALLY SAME AS U.S. POSITION IN TALKS PREVIOUS WEEKEND. WAS YEMENI REJECTION WHAT IT SEEMED TO BE, OR A MISUNDERSTANDING OR A MISTAKE?

7. MUSALLIM SAID IT WAS PARTLY A MISUNDERSTANDING AND PARTLY A "YEMENI" MISTAKE. CHARGE NOTED THAT IF IT WAS A MIS- SECRET

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UNDERSTANDING IT WAS ONE THAT ALL SAUDI MEMBERS SHARED ALONG WITH AMERICANS WHO WERE LISTENING TO CONVERSATION BUT IF SALIH WAS NOT WED TO EXAGGERATED IDEAS OF U.S. FINANCIAL AID AND BILATERAL MILITARY DELIVERIES, THEN THERE WAS BASIS TO PROCEED. MUSALLIM INSISTED, ON BASIS OF LAST TWO DAYS OF TALKS, TOTALING MORE THAN SIX HOURS WITH PRESIDENT SALIH, THAT BASIS OF COOPERATION DID REPEAT DID EXIST.

8. MUSALLIM THEN WENT INTO LENGTHY DESCRIPTION OF REASONS OF BREAKDOWN OF TALKS. TO REMARKABLE DEGREE IT PARALLELED SANA 3986. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, EMPHASIS ON SALIH'S DESIRE FOR NEW AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED TO SIGNAL THAT YEMEN WAS WORKING ON BASIS OF SOMETHING OTHER THAN PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS WITH HAMDI. CHARGE EXPLAINED TO MUSALLIM THAT, IN AMERICAN VIEW, LARGE-SCALE CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR GRANT AID TO YEMEN WERE CERTAINLY IMPOSSIBLE. CHARGE ALSO SAID THERE WAS GOOD REASON NOT TO SEEK SUCH APPROPRIATIONS, AS MOST IMPORTANT GOAL OF AMERICAN EFFORTS IN YEMEN WAS CLOSE SAUDI/YEMENI RELATIONSHIP. SINCE SAUDIS PREPARED TO WITHDRAW THEIR EARLIER OBJECTIONS TO DIRECT U.S. ROLE, WE WERE HAPPY TO BRING AMERICAN TRAINING

TEAMS, SMALL ADVISORY MISSION FOR DIRECT CONTACT WITH YEMENIS AND FOR DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM BUT WE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WAS IN SAUDI OR U.S. INTERESTS TO BECOME INVOLVED OUTSIDE OF FRAMEWORK OF CLOSE CO-OPERATION WITH SAUDIS.

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9. MUSALLIM DID NOT OBJECT FORCEFULLY TO THIS VIEW
BUT SAID HE THOUGHT U.S. SHOULD CONSIDER LARGER FINANCIAL
CONTRIBUTION OF ITS OWN TO YAR DEFENSES. THIS WOULD
BE IMPORTANT EVIDENCE TO YEMENIS OF OUR BONA FIDES IN
SITUATION.

10. CHARGE TOLD MUSALLIM THAT NEXT STEP SEEMED TO BE
LETTER FROM KING KHALID TO USG AND USG RESPONSE TO
LETTER. IN MEANTIME, EMBASSY HERE PLANS TO TRY TO SPEND
QUIET RAMADAN.

11. MEETING CLOSED WITH MUSALLIM REPEATING HIS CONVICTION
THAT SITUATION IN YAR IS "QUITE GOOD -- BARRING THREAT
OF SALIH ASSASSINATION". SALIH IS GENUINE STRONG MAN WITH HEART
IN RIGHT PLACE. IN MUSALLIM'S VIEW, DEPARTURE OF AMERICAN
DELEGATION DURING ARMS TALKS HAD HAD USEFUL
IMPACT ON YEMENI HOPES, AND TALKS, WHEN RENEWED, COULD PROCEED
ON MORE REALISTIC BASIS. CHARGE COMMENTED THAT ANY NEXT
STEPS WOULD HAVE TO BE PRECEDED BY VERY CAREFUL AND

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EXTENSIVE EFFORTS TO SELL PROGRAM HERE IN ADVANCE.
MUSALLIM AGREED AND SAID HE EXPECTED SALIH TO MAKE
TRIP -- QUICKLY AND SECRETLY -- TO SAUDI ARABIA. THIS
WAS FIRST STEP IN PAVING WAY FOR NEW DELEGATION TO
COME.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Concepts: INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, MILITARY SALES
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Draft Date: 16 aug 1978
Decapton Date: 01 jan 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Drafter: n/a
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Subject: NO TURN TO THE SOVIETS SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO SAUDI ENVOY, YAR PRESIDENT SALIH HAS ONCE AGAIN REJECTED SOVIET OFFER OF IMMEDIATE
TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bbf68662-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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